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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

[Public Notice: 10237]

Request for Information for the 2018 *Trafficking in Persons Report*

SUMMARY: The Department of State (“the Department”) requests written information to assist in reporting on the degree to which the United States and foreign governments meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking in persons (“minimum standards”) that are prescribed by the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, as amended (“TVPA”). This information will assist in the preparation of the *Trafficking in Persons Report* (“*TIP Report*”) that the Department submits annually to the U.S. Congress on government efforts to meet the minimum standards. Foreign governments that do not meet the minimum standards and are not making significant efforts to do so may be subject to restrictions on nonhumanitarian, nontrade-related foreign assistance from the United States, as defined by the TVPA. Submissions must be made in writing to the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons at the Department of State by January 31, 2018. Please refer to the *Addresses*, *Scope of Interest*, and *Information Sought* sections of this Notice for additional instructions on submission requirements.

DATES: Submissions must be received by 5 p.m. on January 31, 2018.

ADDRESSES: Written submissions and supporting documentation may be submitted by the following methods:

Email (preferred): tipreport@state.gov for submissions related to foreign governments and tipreportUS@state.gov for submissions related to the United States.

- *Facsimile (fax):* 202-312-9637

- *Mail, Express Delivery, Hand Delivery and Messenger Service:* U.S. Department of State, Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (J/TIP), 1800 G Street, NW, Suite 2201, Washington, DC 20520. Please note that materials submitted by mail may be delayed due to security screenings and processing.

Scope of Interest: The Department requests information relevant to assessing the United States' and foreign governments' efforts to meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking in persons during the reporting period (April 1, 2017 – March 31, 2018). The minimum standards are listed in the *Background* section. Submissions must include information relevant to efforts to meet the minimum standards and should include, but need not be limited to, answering the questions in the *Information Sought* section. Only those questions for which the submitter has direct professional experience should be answered and that experience should be noted. For any critique or deficiency described, please provide a recommendation to remedy it. Note the country or countries that are the focus of the submission.

Submissions may include written narratives that answer the questions presented in this Notice, research, studies, statistics, fieldwork, training materials, evaluations, assessments, and other relevant evidence of local, state/provincial, and federal/central government efforts. To the extent possible, precise dates and numbers of officials or citizens affected should be included.

Where applicable, written narratives providing factual information should provide citations of sources, and copies of the source material should be provided. If possible, send electronic copies of the entire submission, including source material. If primary sources are used, such as research studies, interviews, direct observations, or other sources of quantitative or qualitative data, provide details on the research or data-gathering methodology. The Department does not include in the *TIP Report*, and is therefore not seeking, information on prostitution, migrant smuggling,

visa fraud, or child abuse, unless such conduct occurs in the context of trafficking in persons as defined in the TVPA.

Confidentiality: Please provide the name, phone number, and email address of a single point of contact for any submission. It is Department practice not to identify in the *TIP Report* information concerning sources to safeguard those sources. Please note, however, that any information submitted to the Department may be releasable pursuant to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act or other applicable law. When applicable, portions of submissions relevant to efforts by other U.S. government agencies will be shared with those agencies.

Response: This is a request for information only; there will be no response to submissions.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background

The TIP Report: The *TIP Report* is the most comprehensive worldwide report on governments' efforts to combat trafficking in persons. It represents an annually updated, global look at the nature and scope of trafficking in persons and the broad range of government actions to confront and eliminate it. The U.S. government uses the *Report* to engage in diplomacy, to encourage partnership in creating and implementing laws and policies to combat trafficking, and to target resources on prevention, protection, and prosecution programs. Worldwide, the *Report* is used by international organizations, foreign governments, and nongovernmental organizations as a tool to examine where resources are most needed. Prosecuting traffickers, protecting victims, and preventing trafficking are the ultimate goals of the *Report* and of the U.S government's anti-trafficking policy.

The Department prepares the *TIP Report* using information from across the U.S. government, foreign government officials, nongovernmental and international organizations, published

reports, and research trips to every region. The *Report* focuses on concrete actions that governments take to fight trafficking in persons, including prosecutions, convictions, and sentences for traffickers, as well as victim protection measures and prevention efforts. Each *Report* narrative also includes recommendations for each country. These recommendations are used to assist the Department in measuring governments' progress from one year to the next and determining whether governments meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking in persons or are making significant efforts to do so.

The TVPA creates a four-tier ranking system. Tier placement is based principally on the extent of government action to combat trafficking. The Department first evaluates whether the government fully meets the TVPA's minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking. Governments that do so are placed on Tier 1. For other governments, the Department considers the extent of such efforts. Governments that are making significant efforts to meet the minimum standards are placed on Tier 2. Governments that do not fully meet the minimum standards and are not making significant efforts to do so are placed on Tier 3. Finally, the Department considers Special Watch List criteria and, when applicable, places countries on Tier 2 Watch List. For more information, the 2017 *TIP Report* can be found at <http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2017/index.htm>.

Since the inception of the *TIP Report* in 2001, the number of countries included and ranked has more than doubled; the 2017 *TIP Report* included 187 countries and territories. Around the world, the *TIP Report* and the promising practices reflected therein have inspired legislation, national action plans, policy implementation, program funding, protection mechanisms that complement prosecution efforts, and a stronger global understanding of this crime.

Since 2003, the primary reporting on the United States' anti-trafficking activities has been through the annual Attorney General's Report to Congress and Assessment of U.S. Government Activities to Combat Human Trafficking ("AG Report") mandated by section 105 of the TVPA (22 U.S.C. 7103(d)(7)). Since 2010, the *TIP Report*, through a collaborative interagency process, has included an analysis of U.S. government anti-trafficking efforts in light of the minimum standards to eliminate trafficking in persons set forth by the TVPA.

II. Minimum Standards for the Elimination of Trafficking in Persons

The TVPA sets forth the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking in persons as follows:

- (1) The government of the country should prohibit severe forms of trafficking in persons and punish acts of such trafficking.
- (2) For the knowing commission of any act of sex trafficking involving force, fraud, coercion, or in which the victim of sex trafficking is a child incapable of giving meaningful consent, or of trafficking which includes rape or kidnapping or which causes a death, the government of the country should prescribe punishment commensurate with that for grave crimes, such as forcible sexual assault.
- (3) For the knowing commission of any act of a severe form of trafficking in persons, the government of the country should prescribe punishment that is sufficiently stringent to deter and that adequately reflects the heinous nature of the offense.
- (4) The government of the country should make serious and sustained efforts to eliminate severe forms of trafficking in persons.

The following factors should be considered as indicia of serious and sustained efforts to eliminate severe forms of trafficking in persons:

(1) Whether the government of the country vigorously investigates and prosecutes acts of severe forms of trafficking in persons, and convicts and sentences persons responsible for such acts, that take place wholly or partly within the territory of the country, including, as appropriate, requiring incarceration of individuals convicted of such acts. For purposes of the preceding sentence, suspended or significantly reduced sentences for convictions of principal actors in cases of severe forms of trafficking in persons shall be considered, on a case-by-case basis, whether to be considered as an indicator of serious and sustained efforts to eliminate severe forms of trafficking in persons. After reasonable requests from the Department of State for data regarding investigations, prosecutions, convictions, and sentences, a government which does not provide such data, consistent with the capacity of such government to obtain such data, shall be presumed not to have vigorously investigated, prosecuted, convicted, or sentenced such acts. During the periods prior to the annual report submitted on June 1, 2004, and on June 1, 2005, and the periods afterwards until September 30 of each such year, the Secretary of State may disregard the presumption contained in the preceding sentence if the government has provided some data to the Department of State regarding such acts and the Secretary has determined that the government is making a good faith effort to collect such data.

(2) Whether the government of the country protects victims of severe forms of trafficking in persons and encourages their assistance in the investigation and prosecution of such trafficking, including provisions for legal alternatives to their removal to countries in which they would face retribution or hardship, and ensures that victims are not inappropriately incarcerated, fined, or otherwise penalized solely for unlawful acts as a direct result of being trafficked, including by providing training to law enforcement and immigration officials regarding the identification and treatment of trafficking victims using approaches that focus on the needs of the victims.

(3) Whether the government of the country has adopted measures to prevent severe forms of trafficking in persons, such as measures to inform and educate the public, including potential victims, about the causes and consequences of severe forms of trafficking in persons, measures to establish the identity of local populations, including birth registration, citizenship, and nationality, measures to ensure that its nationals who are deployed abroad as part of a diplomatic, peacekeeping, or other similar mission do not engage in or facilitate severe forms of trafficking in persons or exploit victims of such trafficking, a transparent system for remediating or punishing such public officials as a deterrent, measures to prevent the use of forced labor or child labor in violation of international standards, effective bilateral, multilateral, or regional information sharing and cooperation arrangements with other countries, and effective policies or laws regulating foreign labor recruiters and holding them civilly and criminally liable for fraudulent recruiting.

(4) Whether the government of the country cooperates with other governments in the investigation and prosecution of severe forms of trafficking in persons and has entered into bilateral, multilateral, or regional law enforcement cooperation and coordination arrangements with other countries.

(5) Whether the government of the country extradites persons charged with acts of severe forms of trafficking in persons on substantially the same terms and to substantially the same extent as persons charged with other serious crimes (or, to the extent such extradition would be inconsistent with the laws of such country or with international agreements to which the country is a party, whether the government is taking all appropriate measures to modify or replace such laws and treaties so as to permit such extradition).

(6) Whether the government of the country monitors immigration and emigration patterns for evidence of severe forms of trafficking in persons and whether law enforcement agencies of the country respond to any such evidence in a manner that is consistent with the vigorous investigation and prosecution of acts of such trafficking, as well as with the protection of human rights of victims and the internationally recognized human right to leave any country, including one's own, and to return to one's own country.

(7) Whether the government of the country vigorously investigates, prosecutes, convicts, and sentences public officials, including diplomats and soldiers, who participate in or facilitate severe forms of trafficking in persons, including nationals of the country who are deployed abroad as part of a diplomatic, peacekeeping, or other similar mission who engage in or facilitate severe forms of trafficking in persons or exploit victims of such trafficking, and takes all appropriate measures against officials who condone such trafficking. A government's failure to appropriately address public allegations against such public officials, especially once such officials have returned to their home countries, shall be considered inaction under these criteria. After reasonable requests from the Department of State for data regarding such investigations, prosecutions, convictions, and sentences, a government which does not provide such data consistent with its resources shall be presumed not to have vigorously investigated, prosecuted, convicted, or sentenced such acts. During the periods prior to the annual report submitted on June 1, 2004, and June 1, 2005, and the periods afterwards until September 30 of each such year, the Secretary of State may disregard the presumption contained in the preceding sentence if the government has provided some data to the Department of State regarding such acts and the Secretary has determined that the government is making a good faith effort to collect such data.

(8) Whether the percentage of victims of severe forms of trafficking in the country that are non-citizens of such countries is insignificant.

(9) Whether the government has entered into effective, transparent partnerships, cooperative arrangements, or agreements that have resulted in concrete and measurable outcomes with

(A) domestic civil society organizations, private sector entities, or international nongovernmental organizations, or into multilateral or regional arrangements or agreements, to assist the government's efforts to prevent trafficking, protect victims, and punish traffickers; or

(B) the United States toward agreed goals and objectives in the collective fight against trafficking.

(10) Whether the government of the country, consistent with the capacity of such government, systematically monitors its efforts to satisfy the criteria described in paragraphs (1) through (8) and makes available publicly a periodic assessment of such efforts.

(11) Whether the government of the country achieves appreciable progress in eliminating severe forms of trafficking when compared to the assessment in the previous year.

(12) Whether the government of the country has made serious and sustained efforts to reduce the demand for

(A) commercial sex acts; and

(B) participation in international sex tourism by nationals of the country.

III. Information Sought Relevant to the Minimum Standards

Submissions should include, but need not be limited to, answers to relevant questions below for which the submitter has direct professional experience. Citations to source material should also be provided. Note the country or countries that are the focus of the submission. Please see the *Scope of Interest* section for detailed information regarding submission requirements.

1. How have trafficking methods changed in the past 12 months? For example, are there victims from new countries of origin? Have new vulnerable groups at risk of human trafficking emerged? Is internal trafficking or child trafficking increasing? Has sex trafficking changed, for example from brothels to private apartments? Is labor trafficking now occurring in additional types of industries or agricultural operations? Have new methods of traffickers emerged? Is forced begging a problem? Does child sex tourism occur in the country or involve its nationals abroad, and if so, what are their destination countries?
2. What were the government's major accomplishments in addressing human trafficking?
3. What were the greatest deficiencies in the government's anti-trafficking efforts? What were the limitations on the government's ability to address human trafficking problems in practice?
4. In what ways has the government's efforts to combat trafficking in persons changed in the past year? What new laws, regulations, policies, and implementation strategies exist (e.g., substantive criminal laws and procedures, mechanisms for civil remedies, and victim-witness security, generally and in relation to court proceedings)?
5. Please provide observations regarding the implementation of existing laws and procedures. Are there laws criminalizing those who knowingly solicit or patronize a trafficking victim to perform a commercial sex act and what are the prescribed penalties?
6. Are the anti-trafficking laws and sentences strict enough to reflect the nature of the crime (e.g., commensurate with crimes such as rape or kidnapping)?
7. Please provide observations on overall anti-trafficking law enforcement efforts and the efforts of police and prosecutors to pursue trafficking cases. Were any trafficking cases

investigated and/or prosecuted, and any traffickers convicted during the reporting period? Is the government equally vigorous in pursuing labor trafficking and sex trafficking? Please note any efforts to investigate and prosecute suspects for knowingly soliciting or patronizing a sex trafficking victim to perform a commercial sex act.

8. Do government officials understand the nature of trafficking? If not, please provide examples of misconceptions or misunderstandings.
9. Do judges appear appropriately knowledgeable and sensitized to trafficking cases? What sentences have courts imposed upon traffickers? How common are suspended sentences and prison time of less than one year for convicted traffickers?
10. What was the extent of official complicity in trafficking crimes? Were officials operating as traffickers (whether subjecting persons to forced labor and/or sex trafficking offenses) or taking actions that may facilitate trafficking (including accepting bribes to allow undocumented border crossings or suspending active investigations of suspected traffickers, etc.)? Were there examples of trafficking occurring in state institutions (e.g., prisons, child foster homes, institutions for mentally or physically disabled persons)? What proactive measures did the government take to prevent official complicity in trafficking in persons crimes? How did the government respond to reports of complicity that arose during the reporting period? Has the government made efforts to prosecute, convict, and sentence complicit officials?
11. Has the government vigorously investigated, prosecuted, convicted, and sentenced nationals of the country deployed abroad as part of a diplomatic, peacekeeping, or other similar mission who engage in or facilitate trafficking, including domestic servitude?

12. Has the government investigated, prosecuted, convicted, and sentenced members of organized crime groups that are involved in trafficking?
13. Please provide observations regarding government efforts to address the issue of unlawful child soldiering. Describe the government's efforts to disarm and demobilize child soldiers, to reintegrate former child soldiers, and to monitor the wellbeing of such children after reintegration.
14. Did the government make a coordinated, proactive effort to identify victims of all forms of trafficking? Did officials effectively coordinate among one another and with relevant nongovernmental organizations to refer victims to care? Is there any screening conducted before deportation or when detaining migrants, including unaccompanied minors, to determine whether individuals were subjected to trafficking? Does the government also partner with nongovernmental organizations to conduct screenings?
15. What victim services are provided (legal, medical, food, shelter, interpretation, mental health care, employment, training, etc.)? Who provides these services? If nongovernment organizations provide the services, does the government support their work either financially or otherwise?
16. What was the overall quality of victim care? How could victim services be improved? Was government funding for trafficking victim protection and assistance adequate? Are there gaps in access to victim services?
17. Are services provided adequately to victims of both labor and sex trafficking? Adults and children, including men and boys? Citizens and noncitizens? LGBTI persons? Persons with disabilities? Were such benefits linked to whether a victim assisted law enforcement or

- participated in a trial, or whether a trafficker was convicted? Could adult victims leave shelters at will? Could victims seek employment and work while receiving assistance?
18. Do service providers and law enforcement work together cooperatively, for instance to share information about trafficking trends or to plan for services after a raid? What is the level of cooperation, communication, and trust between service providers and law enforcement?
 19. Were there means by which victims could obtain restitution from the government or file civil suits against traffickers for restitution, and did this happen in practice? Did prosecutors request restitution for victims?
 20. How did the government encourage victims to assist in the investigation and prosecution of trafficking? How did the government protect victims during the trial process? If a victim was a material witness in a court case, was the victim permitted to obtain employment, move freely about the country, or leave the country pending trial proceedings? How did the government work to ensure victims were not re-traumatized during participation in trial proceedings? Can victims provide testimony via video or written statements? Were victims' identities kept confidential as part of such proceedings?
 21. Did the government provide, through a formal policy or otherwise, temporary or permanent residency status, or other relief from deportation, for foreign victims of human trafficking who may face retribution or hardship in the countries to which they would be deported? Were victims given the opportunity to seek legal employment while in this temporary or permanent residency? Were such benefits linked to whether a victim assisted law enforcement, participated in a trial or whether there was a successful prosecution? Does the government repatriate victims who wish to return home? Does the government assist with

third country resettlement? Are victims awaiting repatriation or third country resettlement offered services? Are victims indeed repatriated or are they deported?

22. Does the government effectively assist its nationals exploited abroad? Does the government work to ensure victims receive adequate assistance and support for their repatriation while in destination countries? Does the government provide adequate assistance to repatriated victims after their return to their countries of origin, and if so, what forms of assistance?
23. Does the government inappropriately detain or imprison identified trafficking victims? Does the government punish, penalize, or detain trafficking victims for unlawful acts committed as a result of being subjected to trafficking, such as forgery of documents, illegal immigration, unauthorized employment, prostitution, theft, or drug production or transport? Does law enforcement screen for trafficking victims when arresting individuals in prostitution?
24. What efforts has the government made to prevent human trafficking? Are there laws prohibiting employers or labor agents from confiscating workers' passports or travel documents, switching contracts without the workers' consent, or withholding payment of salaries as a means of keeping workers in a state of compelled service? Are these laws implemented to hold violators accountable and/or are such crimes investigated by law enforcement as potential indicators of trafficking? Do authorities conduct criminal investigations when indicators of trafficking are identified in the context of labor inspections?
25. Does the government operate a hotline for potential victims? If so, how many calls did the hotline receive? What are the hours of operation? What languages are spoken? How many victims were identified as a result of calls to the hotline? Were any investigations initiated as a result of calls to the hotline?

26. Has the government entered into effective bilateral, multilateral, or regional information-sharing and cooperation arrangements that have resulted in concrete and measureable outcomes?
27. Did the government provide assistance to other governments in combating trafficking in persons through trainings or other assistance programs?
28. Does the country have effective policies or laws regulating foreign labor recruiters? What efforts did the government make to punish labor recruiters or brokers involved in the recruitment of workers through knowingly fraudulent offers of employment and/or excessive fees for migration or job placement? What steps did the government take to minimize the trafficking risks faced by migrant workers departing from or arriving in the country and to raise awareness among potential labor migrants about limits on recruitment fees or their rights while abroad?
29. What measures has the government taken to reduce the participation by nationals of the country in international and domestic child sex tourism? If any of the country's nationals are perpetrators of child sex tourism, do the country's child sexual abuse laws allow the prosecution of suspected sex tourists for crimes committed abroad?
30. What measures did the government take to establish the identity of local populations, including birth registration and issuance of documentation, citizenship, and nationality?
31. Did the government fund any anti-trafficking information, education, or awareness campaigns? Were these campaigns targeting potential trafficking victims and/or the demand for commercial sex or goods produced with forced labor? Does the government provide financial support to nongovernment organizations working to promote public awareness?

32. What efforts did the government make to ensure that its policies, regulations, and agreements relating to migration, labor, trade, and investment did not facilitate forced labor?
33. Please provide additional recommendations to improve the government's anti-trafficking efforts.
34. Please highlight effective strategies and practices that other governments could consider adopting.

Kari Johnstone,

Acting Director,

Office to Monitor and Combat

Trafficking in Persons,

Department of State.

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